



FIRE SAFETY TIPS for Dog Owners

In the event of a fire, your pets need protection as much as the rest of your family. The following are some tips to help you prevent fires and know what to do if a fire breaks out in your home.

Be sure you have working smoke detectors on every level of the home.

Place detectors near bedrooms and in the kitchen, either on the ceiling or 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling on the wall, well away from air vents.

- ◆ Be sure detectors are in good working order. Mark your calendar to remind yourself to check the batteries regularly (for example, at the start of a new season).
- ◆ Another smart home safety measure is to install a carbon monoxide detector in your home. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can cause severe illness or death to both people and pets.

Have an emergency exit plan that includes your pets, and practice the plan regularly. Once a fire starts, it spreads rapidly, so everyone should know what to do to escape.

- ◆ Affix window decals around your home so rescue workers know there are pets inside. Decals can be obtained from your local Bark Busters trainer, the ASPCA or your local fire department.
- ◆ Fire experts report that many dogs perish in fires because they are confined in a crate or room and cannot escape. Be sure your fire plan accounts for crated dogs.
- ◆ Keep leashes at hand so you can leash your dog to prevent him from escaping in panic.
- ◆ Keep pets on a ground floor of your home to make rescue easier.
- ◆ Keep hallways and exits free of clutter to allow you to get out of a burning house more safely.

Make sure pets always wear current identification.

Consider subscribing to a service like 1-800-HELP-4-PETS, whose Pet Protector System will help to reunite you and your pet if he becomes lost (www.Help4Pets.com).

Research a safe place to take your pets. Ask friends or relatives if they can shelter you and your pets, and check with local pet-boarding facilities, humane societies and animal shelters.

Assemble a dog disaster kit with your dog's food and medications, copies of his health records, your veterinarian's phone number and list of facilities you can take your pet, recent photo taken of you with your dog, favorite toy or bedding, and extra leash and collar affixed with the pet's ID.

Give a key to a trusted neighbor, and make sure he knows where the dog might be located within the house so he can inform firefighters.

Ask your local fire department if the fire trucks carry pet oxygen masks. If they don't, ask neighborhood pet owners to join you in making a donation to buy masks for the fire department.

Listen to your dog! Canines have a keen sense of smell and can detect smoke long before humans. If your dog is acting strangely, look into the situation promptly and be prepared to gather your family and follow your evacuation plan.

If you must evacuate and can't find your dog in the house, leave an outside door open and then call your dog's name once you get out. He may be able to hear you and escape.

If your dog was in a smoke-filled building or if you can smell smoke on his fur, take him to your veterinarian. Toxic fumes can be deadly.

Prevent fires from happening by ensuring your dog doesn't have access to dangerous combustible items.

- ◆ Keep electrical wires and batteries out of your pet's reach.
- ◆ Chewing or biting anything electrical can cause him shock or burns, or could start a fire.
- ◆ Don't leave lighted candles unattended. A lit candle knocked over by a swinging tail can burn your pet or cause a fire.

